



Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

A report on

Cwrt Rawlin Primary School

**Cae Meillion
Caerphilly
CF83 1SN**

Date of inspection: April 2024

by

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

About Cwrt Rawlin Primary School

Name of provider	Cwrt Rawlin Primary School
Local authority	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	
Number of pupils on roll	365
Pupils of statutory school age	273
Number in nursery classes	44
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 23.7%)	4.6%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 13.2%)	8.4%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	*
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	*
Date of headteacher appointment	01/09/2015
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	13/06/2016
Start date of inspection	22/04/2024

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website: mylocalschool.gov.wales

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

Overview

The headteacher, staff and governors have created a highly inclusive ethos at the school. As a result, pupils thrive in their work and develop into kind, considerate and mature individuals.

Nearly all pupils are polite and well-mannered, and their interaction with each other and all adults is exemplary. They greet visitors with a warm smile and a friendly greeting, which makes visitors immediately feel a part of the wider school community. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are excellent. Nearly all engage immediately at the beginning of each lesson and show perseverance and resilience in what they achieve.

All staff collaborate and support each other well. The school benefits from a strong team of dedicated, skilled teachers and teaching assistants who work diligently to help the pupils in their care. Teachers plan interesting lessons that enable pupils to develop a good range of skills. In particular, they are highly effective at helping pupils to achieve exceptional reading and oracy skills. Overall, pupils write to a good standard and develop progressive digital skills, which they apply confidently in other areas of learning. Although pupils develop sound discrete mathematical skills, they do not apply their numeracy skills often enough in other areas of learning. Furthermore, pupils do not make sufficient progress in developing their Welsh language skills.

School staff provide effective support to pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well and provide beneficial support tailored for individual needs. However, across the school, there is a tendency for staff to over-direct the learning, which inhibits the pupils to develop as independent learners.

The leadership of the school is highly effective. The headteacher provides compassionate leadership that helps staff, pupils and their families to succeed. Governors are very supportive of the school and show a good awareness of their roles and responsibilities. They support leaders and staff effectively. The headteacher, with the support of staff and governors, promotes a robust culture of safeguarding. The links with parents and the local community are strong.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve pupils' Welsh oracy skills
- R2 Ensure that teachers across the school provide regular opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills

What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

Main evaluation

Learning

On entry to the school, many pupils have literacy, numeracy and social skills that correspond to their stage of development or are slightly higher than expected. During their time at the school, most make purposeful progress in a wide range of skills. Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and those who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) make good progress against their personal targets. Overall, most more able pupils achieve well.

A prominent strength of the school is the way that most pupils communicate clearly and productively with each other and adults and develop excellent oracy skills over time. Nearly all nursery pupils listen to and engage with class stories and respond to instructions positively. They are very enthusiastic to share their work, for instance when describing the stages of the life cycle of a butterfly. Across the school, most pupils hold conversations with ease and maturity. They are comfortable discussing any aspects of their work and school life. By Year 6, most pupils plan and deliver effective presentations. For example, they present a speech to representatives of the Welsh Government about their proposal to improve attitudes to recycling, showing a clear understanding of the issues.

Many pupils show a positive attitude to learning Welsh. Overall, they have a suitable knowledge of basic phrases but do not have a wide enough range of vocabulary to respond to simple questions. Very few pupils use their Welsh oracy skills in informal situations.

Through a variety of practical activities, many pupils in the nursery quickly develop a sound knowledge of different letter sounds. As they gain confidence, they begin to combine the sounds and read simple sentences correctly. By Year 2, most pupils become confident readers who can explain the content of their books in detail. From Year 3 to Year 6, most pupils read with understanding in various contexts. They develop their higher-order reading skills purposefully to gather information from different sources, for example when presenting on the different food groups. Overall, most pupils have a broad knowledge of a range of authors.

Most pupils develop their writing skills effectively as they move through the school. Younger pupils make marks creatively using different media and, using their early writing skills, create simple posters to publicise environmental issues. Many pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 begin to consider their audience well through their writing. They write facts about a local children's cancer charity and capably create an information booklet about pond life, for example. By the end of their time at the school, many write maturely and at increasing length across the curriculum. They develop a secure

understanding of different forms of writing, such as producing an emotive description about a war-torn land. However, most pupils do not write independently and creatively often enough.

Most pupils make good progress in their mathematical development and their understanding of discrete skills is strong. Most pupils in the nursery class can compare the weight of different common fruits and order them from the heaviest to the lightest, confidently. By the end of Year 2, many work with numbers up to a 100 with ease. From Year 3 to Year 6, most pupils build on their mathematical knowledge effectively. For example, they use a formula to calculate the perimeter and area of shapes and use data correctly when calculating the amount of plastic that food and drink companies use. Most pupils' thinking and problem-solving skills are developing purposefully. However, they do not always apply their numeracy skills in other areas of learning.

Most pupils develop sound digital skills. The youngest pupils use a range of apps and programs with ease to enrich their work. In addition, they collect data confidently and present it on a bar graph, for example to indicate how many birds the pupils spotted in the forest area. As pupils move from Year 3 to Year 6, they combine their digital skills successfully to support their learning across the curriculum. For example, they use a green screen to present the story of Santes Dwynwen and use a formula to calculate how much the heart rate increases and decreases from the impact of exercising.

Most pupils develop worthwhile physical skills. They participate enthusiastically and energetically in a wide range of physical activity in lessons, in after-school clubs and as part of county wide competitions. This has a positive effect on their confidence, their ability to work together, and their fitness and well-being. Overall, most pupils' creative skills are developing suitably, for instance when studying different types of art, they make mature observations. However, most pupils do not create their own art work often enough.

Well-being and attitudes to learning

All pupils speak with pride about their school as a safe and supportive environment. They feel that the school helps them to treat everyone fairly and would recommend the school to others. Most pupils are confident that all adults are there for them and that relationships between staff and pupils are respectful and contribute positively to their well-being and attitudes to learning. The behaviour of nearly all pupils in classes and around the school is excellent. They are polite and considerate towards each other, staff and visitors. The work of the pupil play-leaders at breaktimes and lunchtimes has a very positive effect on the happiness and feeling of safety of the youngest pupils as they become more confident and settle into school life.

Overall, most pupils across the school are capable learners, demonstrate a keen interest in their learning and readily complete tasks. For example, the younger pupils collaborate well with each other when designing a model greenhouse. Nearly all pupils are proud to share their work and can competently recall and discuss their prior learning. Across the school most pupils sustain concentration and avoid any minor distractions. They share with the teachers what they would like to learn and the older pupils choose how they would like to present their work. Most pupils respond

positively to guidance from teachers on how to improve their work. Although they can discuss what they need to do to improve, because of a lack of opportunity, most pupils do not assess their own and their peers' work independently.

Most pupils persevere and respond well to feedback from their peers when faced with difficulties. For example, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 work well collaboratively to overcome challenges when compiling a database to show the effect of exercise on their heart rates. Overall, most pupils become ambitious and confident learners. However, over-direction by adults inhibits many pupils' ability to look for solutions, problem solve and progress in their learning independently.

Many older pupils have a deep understanding of their rights and responsibilities as global citizens. Their knowledge of how these rights impact on their learning is notable and they discuss unfairness and discrimination maturely. Most pupils show empathy for others by supporting local and national charities of their choice. In order to raise money, they use their entrepreneurial skills by designing, making and successfully selling a variety of products. For example, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 create and sell home-made badges to raise money for the local children's cancer charity. In addition, nearly all pupils develop a good understanding of ethical issues and the importance of looking after their environment and the wider world. Over time, pupils thrive and become mature and caring individuals.

Most pupils show exemplary maturity when taking on additional responsibilities, such as becoming members of the school council, developing their role as Healthy School Leaders and contributing to the work of the eco committee. The Worry Buddies show a strong commitment to considering and supporting all pupils' well-being by managing the school's worry box system and helping pupils to speak up when they have concerns. Overall, these groups listen carefully to pupils' views and contribute meaningfully to school improvement, such as creating a vegetable patch and a reflection area in the school grounds.

Nearly all pupils across the school have a sound knowledge and positive attitudes towards leading healthy lives. They know that fruit and vegetables are an essential part of a healthy diet, and most pupils take part regularly in physical activities during the day. Many pupils benefit from taking part in extra-curricular activities, such as rugby, football and netball. These sessions improve their physical and social skills effectively outside the normal school day.

Teaching and learning experiences

The staff create a calm, nurturing and productive environment for pupils to learn. Teachers know their pupils well and form warm, respectful relationships with them. Staff use effective processes to promote exemplary behaviour that supports pupils to be highly motivated and develops them as positive and confident learners. Teaching assistants provide valuable support and contribute fully to the inclusive ethos of the school.

Leaders have a clear vision for the school's curriculum. Staff work together closely to ensure a well-structured and relevant curriculum that it builds systematically on pupils' existing knowledge, understanding and skills as they move through the school. Teachers from the same year groups plan together effectively to ensure that

learning activities are coherent and purposeful. The school supplements its curriculum well with a range of visits and visitors to school. In addition, the older pupils experience the world of work in real life contexts through a careers fair. The school invites parents to share their various vocations with pupils and this includes roles such as a zookeeper, a film maker and a civil engineer. This helps pupils to consider the jobs they would like and the skills and attributes they need to succeed.

Staff provide pupils with opportunities to choose the class topic and to share what they would like to learn. This successfully broadens pupils' interests in national and global issues, such as exploring how the over-use of plastic impacts on the oceans around the world and learning about the diversity of global cultures. For instance, pupils compare the different lifestyles in countries around the world and learn about the work and impact of prominent Black people. Although the school offers residential opportunities outside the local area that broaden the pupils' knowledge of Wales adequately, overall, teachers do not plan to develop pupils' sense of belonging to their 'cynefin' and wider community well enough.

Staff have designed their classrooms to be stimulating and enjoyable places for pupils to learn. The school grounds further enhance curriculum provision for games and physical education. In addition, staff make very effective use of the forest area to enable authentic learning activities. For example, older pupils develop an understanding of what it is like living in temporary accommodation by building their own shelters.

The provision to improve pupils' oracy skills in English is a particular strength. Through well-considered activities, pupils build confidence and resilience as they progress from class to class. Teachers often plan and design the curriculum to provide engaging experiences that enable pupils to write for different purposes in all areas of learning and make good progress, particularly in non-fiction writing. The school's provision for developing reading skills is highly effective and teachers map digital skills clearly. Overall, the discrete teaching of maths is well established. However, there are inconsistent opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across other areas of the curriculum.

Staff plan regular sessions for pupils to learn and recall Welsh language patterns and, in a very few classes, staff are beginning to use Welsh phrases during the day suitably. Generally, however, there are limited opportunities for pupils to use their Welsh oracy skills and this impacts negatively on pupils' ability to speak Welsh with confidence and competence.

In most classes, teachers plan activities that are interesting and engaging, which strengthen pupils' attitudes to learning effectively. On the whole, teachers provide activities that meet the needs of pupils well, building successfully on previous learning. In a very few classes, teachers adapt activities thoughtfully to provide pupils with a level of independence. However, overall, there is a tendency for teachers to lead most of the activities and therefore, pupils do not take enough responsibility for their own learning to become independent learners.

In lessons, teachers provide clear explanations to pupils to ensure that they are fully aware of what they need to do to succeed and use questioning carefully to support pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding. They use assessment

information purposefully to inform the next steps in learning. Although teachers respond to pupils' work by highlighting what they have done well and what needs correcting, they do not provide opportunities for pupils to improve their learning through peer and self-assessment.

Care, support and guidance

The school has a very happy, inclusive and welcoming ethos. Its strong emphasis on ensuring fairness, care and respect for others contributes strongly towards the polite and well-behaved nature of pupils in the school.

Staff plan well to meet pupils' emotional, personal, and social needs. They create a calm and relaxed atmosphere for the pupils and are committed to their emotional well-being. The use of the 'calming tent' in each class provides an opportunity for pupils to manage their emotions successfully in a safe and familiar place.

Provision for pupils with ALN is one of the school's strengths. The ALN co-ordinators work closely with the staff to ensure suitable and prompt help and support for pupils with additional needs, which enables most to make good progress against their personal targets and to develop their literacy and numeracy skills successfully. The school's emphasis on providing targeted intervention to individuals and small groups has a very positive affect on pupils' well-being. There are valuable working relationships with a wide range of external partners that help to provide effective support and guidance for pupils and their families. In addition, teaching assistants work knowledgeably and skilfully to support pupils and their parents through one-to-one and family engagement sessions.

The school provides valuable opportunities for pupils, including those who are eligible for free school meals, those from low-income households and those who have ALN, to take on leadership roles and contribute to whole-school decisions effectively. The pupil voice groups have successfully improved pupils' well-being and their attitudes towards sustainability. Through the work of the school council and close links with parents and the local community, the school is improving an area of the playground to make it accessible and inclusive to all pupils.

The school's arrangements to promote pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are good. During collective worship, pupils regularly consider the views of others and reflect on their own beliefs. Through a range of class activities, pupils gain a deep understanding of their rights as a child and issues around equality and diversity. As a result, they are aware of their own identity and their place as responsible citizens of Wales and the wider community. For example, pupils gain a sound understanding of the importance of courage and compassion through their study of the plight of refugees. Overall, the school promotes clear principles that help pupils distinguish between right and wrong.

The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities for pupils that develop their physical and social skills well. In addition, the school invited young Welsh athletes to give motivational speeches to further deepen pupils' understanding of how to become healthy and confident individuals. The school uses community businesses skilfully as an educational resource, for example to enable pupils to make and taste healthy smoothies in the local café.

Teachers plan engaging and relevant educational visits. These experiences contribute successfully to extending pupils' understanding of society and the world. Teachers ensure suitable opportunities to improve pupils' sense of their Welsh identity through cultural events, taking part in the school's St David's day activities and in the annual dance festival in the local castle. These experiences develop pupils' self-confidence, pride in themselves and their ability to work with others.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are not a cause for concern. The school's procedures for ensuring pupils' regular attendance are robust. Staff keep a record of any absences and contact parents in a timely manner to discuss any concerns regarding their children's attendance.

Leadership and management

Leaders ensure that the school is a caring and inclusive environment. They have a clear vision for the school based on valuing every pupil and giving them opportunities to thrive and be successful. This, along with values of honesty, friendship and perseverance, has created the positive ethos that permeates the school.

The headteacher provides strong leadership. Alongside her deputy, staff, and governors, she has created an effective team that ensures that pupils' well-being is a priority. They work conscientiously to meet the needs of all pupils.

The headteacher has successfully built leadership capacity across the school. She has enabled staff to fulfil their roles and responsibilities purposefully and actively encourages them to develop professionally. Leaders carefully co-ordinate the performance management of all staff and link it closely to the school's improvement priorities. For example, the recent whole-school training for improving pupils' oracy skills has successfully improved the way in which pupils speak and listen. As a result, standards of oracy across the school are exceptional. In addition, the focus on improving pupils' social skills has impacted positively on the pupils' readiness to learn. The school has worked closely with other schools in its cluster to benefit from the expertise of other professionals to develop a new approach to feedback.

School leaders undertake a well-planned programme of activities to regularly monitor and evaluate teaching and learning, and pupil progress. Leaders draw upon a range of first-hand information to inform their judgements and accurately identify important areas for improvement. For instance, a focus on developing pupils' writing skills is reflected in improvements across all areas of learning. In recent years, the school has also used self-evaluation to strengthen its approach to supporting pupils' well-being effectively. Overall, the school's improvement priorities are relevant, and most staff have a good understanding of how these contribute to improvements in their daily practice. However, the school's most recent evaluations have not identified the need to provide pupils with more opportunities to work independently.

Leaders and staff address local and national priorities successfully. For example, they have made good progress in designing the school's curriculum. This includes enriching, cross-curricular tasks that involve pupil voice as an integral part of their planning. Work to address the Welsh Government's additional learning needs reform and tackling the impact of poverty is successful. Leaders have very recently adopted a new plan to develop pupils' Welsh language skills in formal situations. However,

this has yet to impact on pupil progress and to ensure that they build suitably on their prior learning.

Governors have a wide range of skills, experience and professional expertise that enables them to fulfil their role as critical friends to the school. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and are contributing to the school's strategic direction suitably. They support the headteacher to manage and deploy the school's financial resources effectively and fulfil their statutory duties competently, for instance ensuring that the school has appropriate arrangements to promote healthy eating and drinking. Governors support the work of the school well to promote its strong safeguarding culture.

Leaders address the impact of socio-economic disadvantage on pupils' outcomes successfully. They assign the pupil development grant to worthwhile initiatives that make a notable difference to pupils' engagement and attitudes to learning and ensure that there are no barriers to pupils participating in visits and extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, the school has developed successful mental health and well-being support for pupils and their families. As a result, most pupils who access the provision engage purposefully in their lessons and make good progress.

The school has strong links with the parents and the local community. Staff share relevant information regularly to strengthen the parents' knowledge of the school's expectations and successes.

Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of publication. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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